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SUBJECT: ETHIOPIA: TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS REPORT (PART 1 - OVERVIEW
AND PREVENTION)

REF: 06 STATE 202745 (NOTAL)

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11. (U) Per reftel, Post provides the following input on trafficking in persons issues in Ethiopia. (Due to length of information reported, responses are being reported in two complementary cables.)

12. (U) Embassy point of contact: Pol/Econ Officer Kimberly E. Wright, office: +251 (11) 517-4112; fax: +251 (11) 124-2405, WRIGHTKE2@STATE.GOV

13. (U) Number of hours spent in preparation of TIP report cable:
FEOC DCM: 1 hour
FS02 pol/econ officer: 4 hours
FP04 pol/econ officer: 40 hours
LES: 50 hours

14. (U) Responses are keyed to questions in paragraphs 27-30 of reftel.

15. (SBU) QUESTION 27 ? OVERVIEW:

1A. Ethiopia is a country of origin for internationally trafficked women, to a far lesser extent men, and a small number of children. Trafficking also occurs within the country's borders. Estimates vary, but local non-governmental organizations believe an estimated 25,000 to 30,000 Ethiopians were trafficked internationally in 2006, slightly more than the previous year. Trafficking reported in 2006 was primarily labor-related. Government officials do not have estimates for 2006. More females than males were victims of international trafficking, with prostitution comprising a minor share. Young women, particularly those age 18-30, were the most commonly trafficked group, while a small number of children were also reportedly trafficked internationally.

1B. Young women are trafficked from all parts of Ethiopia primarily to the Gulf States, Sudan and Djibouti to work as domestic laborers and less typically as commercial sex workers. Lebanon, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia are the most common destination

countries. According to International Organization for Migration (IOM) officials in Addis Ababa, there are a total of more than 130,000 Ethiopian migrant workers (legal and illegal) in the Middle East, predominantly women. NGOs and Ethiopia's Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MOLSA) estimate that the majority of illegal Ethiopian workers in Middle Eastern countries were trafficked rather than smuggled for employment purposes. According to data from MOLSA and IOM, 13,498 Ethiopian workers migrated to the Middle East between September 2005 and August 2006; and 12,016 Ethiopian workers migrated to the Middle East between September 2006 and January 2007.

-- Approximately 17,000 illegal Ethiopian workers remain in Lebanon, along with over 15,000 legally immigrated Ethiopians, representing a significant share of Lebanon's estimated 80,000 migrant worker community. (IOM reports that Lebanon continued to issue work permits to Ethiopians, after suspending issuance for 18 months.)

-- Approximately 10,000 to 12,000 illegal Ethiopian workers are believed to be in Yemen. Several thousand Ethiopians are believed to be stranded in Puntland (Somalia), having unsuccessfully sought transit onward to Yemen. In February 2007, UNHCR reported that the captain of a boat sailing from Somalia to Yemen (across the Gulf of Aden) forced 240 passengers overboard, resulting in the deaths of at least 115 Somali and Ethiopian passengers.

-- During the recent Lebanese-Israeli conflict, the IOM repatriated approximately 3,000 Ethiopian migrant workers to Ethiopia. Many reportedly crossed the border over to Syria. IOM Addis was trying to negotiate the return of about a thousand Ethiopian migrants who were in prison awaiting deportation, but they somehow escaped. Ethiopia's foreign ministry informed Lebanese officials that these detained Ethiopians did not want to return to Ethiopia (possibly due to fear of being stigmatized by their families). IOM was also told that almost all were "run-aways" who had fled from their employers after having left their home country legally.

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-- From late 2005 to early 2006, Lebanon (refused to grant visas) to Ethiopian nationals. However, thousands of Ethiopians illegally crossed the border in pursuit of work (and/or as victims of trafficking). Over the last 14 months (since Lebanon has lifted their visa ban against Ethiopian nationals), the amount of trafficking to Lebanon has increased.

-- IOM officials cite Yemen as a significant transit point, for young Ethiopian girls (average age 14-15) being trafficked to Djibouti. A recent impact assessment concludes that many of these trafficked girls in Djibouti have HIV/AIDS.

-- There are no reports of trafficking of Ethiopians to the United States. A few years ago, IOM reported that approximately a dozen clients claimed that a smuggler was charging up to 80,000-100,000 birr (USD 9,050- 11,312) to smuggle them into the United States. Since then, there is little to no information available about these routes. Yemen and Lebanon have been identified as some of the most popular destinations for trafficking and smuggling.

-- In Saudi Arabia, there are reportedly close to 80,000 illegal Ethiopian migrants, the bulk of whom initially traveled to Saudi Arabia on religious pilgrimage (the Hajj and Umra) but then remained illegally. Some 5,000 to 7,000 illegal Ethiopian workers are believed to be living in Kuwait and Bahrain; and 4,000 to 5,000 illegal Ethiopians are believed to be living in the United Arab Emirates, principally in Dubai.

-- Men tend to be trafficked to Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States primarily as low-skilled labor. NGOs report transit countries include Egypt, Yemen, Djibouti, Sudan, Libya, Tanzania, and Kenya. Some Ethiopian women have been reportedly trafficked onward from Lebanon to Europe (specifically Turkey and Greece). Trafficked Ethiopians transit Egypt, Yemen, Djibouti, Kenya, and Tanzania, to perform domestic labor in Lebanon and other Gulf states. They also transit Sudan and Libya as part of irregular migration to Europe and North America. Ethiopians are trafficked to Djibouti for domestic

labor and the sex industry, and to South Africa to perform labor associated with hosting the World Cup.

-- Local NGOs report that internal trafficking of children and adults within Ethiopia has continued to be a serious problem. Both adults and children are believed to be trafficked from rural areas to urban areas, principally for domestic labor purposes, and, to a lesser extent, for prostitution and other labor activities, such as weaving and street vending. Vulnerable individuals (such as young adults from rural areas and children), who transit the Addis Ababa bus terminal, are sometimes identified and targeted by agents (or traffickers) who approach them offering jobs, food, guidance, or shelter. Some social workers have reported that people from urban areas recruit children in their villages for housemaid work or traditional weaving. NGO representatives report that some traffickers focus on rural villages to recruit specific types or categories of laborers.

-- IOM officials report some linkages between internal and international trafficking, specifically noting that children internally trafficked from Dire Dawa, Bahar Dar, and Dessie, are frequently sent to the Middle East, transiting through Dire Dawa, Jijiga, Bosasso (in Somalia), and then Djibouti.

-- High unemployment and extreme poverty continued to provide the "push" behind labor and migration trends, while jobs, opportunities, and better living standards overseas served to "pull" desperate Ethiopians overseas, according to IOM officials. NGOs believe that, while the number of legal labor migration employment agencies has risen from 17 to 36 in the last year, the GOE has significantly tightened its implementation of various labor and employment agency provisions. The net result, according to NGOs, is that more Ethiopians are trafficked to neighboring countries (particularly Djibouti, Kenya, Tanzania, and Sudan) or via intermediate destinations (such as Syria or Egypt). A current total of 36 registered employment agencies in Ethiopia, have been licensed by MOLSA to send workers abroad. These Addis Ababa-based agencies?

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primary business hubs are in the Middle East. MOLSA has recently completed revising proclamation 104/98, a tool which until now has lacked coordination, supervision, and controlling mechanisms. The amended proclamation, pending early 2007 parliamentary ratification, should streamline employment agency protections for migrant workers.

-- Ethiopia is not a destination country for internationally trafficked victims. Internally trafficked individuals are commonly targeted on arrival at Addis Ababa or recruited from rural villages for work as housemaids or for unskilled jobs in shops, factories, restaurants, or bars. Those without local family contacts or other recourse return to their villages and are at risk for exploitation, including prostitution. Coercion is sometimes a factor.

-- Employment-seeking individuals frequently choose to move from rural to urban areas. It is also common for family members to seek job opportunities for unemployed kin.

-- The GOE has demonstrated political will to address the trafficking problem, in particular by informing Ethiopians about risks and realities of seeking employment overseas. Studies undertaken by IOM also include: Assessment of Trafficking in Women and Children in and from Ethiopia (November 2006). The GOE also supervises the work of the legal international labor migration firms, which includes counter-trafficking training in their initial screening and pre-departure counseling programs. Pre-departure counseling is designed to empower potential migrants by providing information about the realities of irregular migration, with specific focus on risks (such as exploitation, violence and abuse).

-- Additionally, the project provides potential migrants and their families with counseling on human rights, financial management and health issues. These services aim to enable potential migrants to make better-informed decisions, and to facilitate their

socio-economic integration into their destination/host country. IOM has also provided anonymous telephone hotline counseling support. This pre-departure counseling complements an already existing IOM information campaign to disseminate reliable information on issues related to irregular migration and trafficking to the community at large. The government has championed a program that involves matching employers in Lebanon with potential Ethiopian-based employees. Under the program, government officials verify the employer, position and contract terms in Lebanon. Once the employment opportunity is deemed valid, the contract and employment details are sent to MOLSA and then on to the prospective employee. Family members or friends already working in Lebanon often arrange for such referrals. The employee is then able to travel legally and registers with the Beirut consulate.

-- The IOM Rapid Assessment (pp.33-42) reports: ?Trafficking routes usually overlap with the normal routes for movement and migration from rural to urban areas. Moreover, the process of in-country trafficking of women and children is largely not an organized activity involving actors exclusively and recurrently involved in trafficking. A typical case of trafficking involves a person traveling to a rural area for holidays or other purposes not directly associated with trafficking, and incidentally recruiting and transporting a relative or acquaintance to a town in which he lives. In most cases, it is only possible to draw a general pattern of movement of women and children from rural to urban centers and from one urban center to another, usually larger, urban center.

?Still, some patterns of transportation and route flow from the recruitment process described above. One such pattern concerns transportation of boys from Gamo Gofa, one of the zones in the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples? Regional State (SNNPR), to Addis Ababa. The production of ?shemma? and other traditional textiles in home-based industries is dominated by the people who currently live in the city and originally come from Gamo Gofa Zone, mainly Chenchu Woreda. In order to make their businesses more profitable, the weavers recruit a large number of children from their woredas of origin in Gamo Gofa, whom they force to work for

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long hours and with little or no payment. It is also reported that these weavers have established second families in Gamo Gofa, to visit the area after holiday seasons and to create opportunities for recruitment.

?The normal route used for transportation of the boy children extends from kebeles in Chenchu woreda and other adjoining woredas in Gamo Gofa, to the town of Arba Minch, by traditional means of transportation and local public transportation vehicles. Then, the traffickers and their child victims board the cross-country public transport buses at the Arba Minch bus terminal to travel to Addis Ababa.

?In recent years, due to relatively improved awareness and regulations set up to control trafficking around the bus terminal in Arba Minch, the normal route of transportation has been modified to avoid Arba Minch: using traditional means of transport directly from Chenchu to Wolayita and taking public buses to Addis Ababa. Increased control by law enforcement officials at the Wolayita bus terminal has reportedly led traffickers to take public transport from other small towns to arrive in Addis Ababa.

?Another route involves the transportation of women and girl children from rural parts of the Amhara Region to larger regional towns and Addis Ababa. Rural areas of the Amhara Region are the main places of origin for most trafficked women and girl children. Although all parts of this Region are affected by trafficking, various sources have pointed out that Estee and Farta woredas of Southern Gondar Zone are the most affected. Traffickers use the normal transportation means and route to bring their victims to Addis Ababa or other urban areas. During travel, the traffickers usually claim to be relatives of the victims. According to some Addis Ababa bus terminal employees, some traffickers dress and act like priests to avoid being suspected of trafficking women and children.

?Though not well documented, a relatively visible pattern of trafficking of boys and girls from woredas in the Guraghe zone of SNNPR to Addis Ababa, through the town of Wolkite and other woreda towns with connecting roads to the capital, has also been identified. Like the other routes, the trafficking route used is the traditional means of transportation to nearby woreda towns and public transport buses directly to Addis Ababa or through the town of Wolkite. Parents and relatives in the woredas of the zone traditionally send their children, especially boys, to Addis Ababa at an early age to earn money in the informal sector and support family members at home. There is a long tradition of migration from the woredas, which suffer from overpopulation, due to stories of successful individuals who have previously migrated from their communities. The migrating boys mostly work as shoeshiners, street vendors, and other forms of informal labor, either living in groups or with relatives in Addis Ababa; while the girls become housemaids with the hope of being able to send money to their family and save enough to start their own small retail shop. This trend of migration reportedly masks an increasing level of trafficking in children from the Guraghe zone. According to these reports, children are recruited and transported to Addis Ababa using the same route without the traditionally required consent of their parents and relatives, and are exploited in the informal sector principally as housemaids and girl prostitutes.

?Another less documented route involves the trafficking of boys from Wolayita and Sidama zones in the SNNPR to some rural parts of Oromia, mainly to Arsi and Bale zones. Police in the towns of Awassa and Shashemene have several times apprehended traffickers traveling with five to ten boys destined for sale as shepherd to farmers in rural areas of those zones.?

-- In December 2005, the Ministry of Justice forwarded a proposal to Post for a public awareness campaign on trafficking. In 2006, Post approved and funded a USD 20,000 project submitted by the MOJ through Project Concern International. Using the funds provided by Post, the National Task Force conducted two three-day workshops in Addis Ababa and Nazareth in November 2006 and January 2007 respectively. The more than 105 workshop participants included

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representatives from civil society, NGOs, regional high court judges, regional women's bureaus, police commissioners, and national labor bureau personnel.

-- Four papers were presented at the workshops. The Deputy Head of the Addis Ababa Justice Bureau shared highlights from a draft paper, ?The Analysis of Human Trafficking Provisions Under the New Penal Code of Ethiopia in Light of Individual Instruments Dealing with Human Trafficking,? which delved more deeply into prevention, protection and prosecution issues in Ethiopia. The second paper, ?General Findings of the International Organization for Migration's Research on Human trafficking in Ethiopia? examined the different modalities and phases of trafficking, (i.e., recruitment, transportation). The third paper, ?Experience of Philippines Overseas Employment? outlined the country's institutional framework and policy for overseas employment, management of migratory workers, and measures taken to protect them. The fourth paper, ?Development of Human Trafficking Data Collection Methods and Formats,? explored basic data collection concepts and current human trafficking data gaps and challenges.

1C. Lack of funding, personnel, and training constrains the government's ability to assist and protect trafficking in persons victims, despite its political will. The World Bank ranks Ethiopia as one of the world's poorest countries. Increasingly cognizant of the problem and the need to do more, the GOE has begun to demonstrate more political will in the form of follow-through on cross-training initiatives and media campaigns. In late 2006 and early 2007, the government closed illegal international employment agencies and enforced immigration requirements for departing labor migrants. However, low trafficking conviction rates sends a poor message to Ethiopians both here and abroad. Ethiopia's under-resourced and overwhelmed judicial system maintains its incapacity to vigorously prosecute TIP cases. In addition, police officials, reflecting popular sentiment, appear to be less alarmed

with the problem of trafficking, insisting upon Ethiopians? constitutional rights to travel freely. Domestic trafficking has received less attention. Consequently, monitoring and enforcement have lagged.

¶D. The government monitors immigration and emigration patterns for evidence of trafficking. With IOM assistance, immigration officers have been trained to spot and question those most susceptible (children and young women) to trafficking and verify the legitimacy of the travel. Beyond application of proclamation 104, there has been little effort to use such data in any meaningful way to address the problem.

¶6. (SBU) QUESTION 28 ? PREVENTION:

¶A. The GOE acknowledges that trafficking is a problem in-country.

¶B. Established in 2003, an inter-ministerial counter-trafficking task force comprises officials from the ministries of foreign affairs, justice, information, and women's affairs, as well as MOLSA, the Federal Police Commission, the Office of Immigration, Addis Ababa Police Commission, and the Addis Ababa Prosecutors' Office. The task force met regularly prior to the outbreak of post election-related violence in June 2005, but did not resume regular meetings until July 2006. Prior to July 2006, MOLSA assumed overall coordination responsibility, and its annual action plan included a summary of its work plans for the year with respect to counter trafficking.

¶C. The GOE supported IOM-sponsored anti-trafficking information campaigns, including large-group counseling efforts in schools and universities and various media campaigns including a weekly 20 minute anti-trafficking and awareness creation programs on national radio. IOM also produced two one-minute radio spots, broadcasted in both Amharic and English. A 30-minute documentary highlighting the problem of trafficking was produced and aired on national television in December 2006. The documentary features interviews with counter-trafficking personnel, officials from various concerned ministries, and testimonies of trafficking victims. In January 2007, 10,000 anti-trafficking calendars were produced and

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distributed to partner NGOs and government counterparts, the Ethiopian Teachers' Association, and schools. The calendars feature paintings by a trafficking victim and her art school students.

¶D. The Ministry of Education (MOE) continued to work with UNICEF on a campaign to boost the enrollment of girls in schools in Ethiopia's poorest regions. The MOE regularly organizes workshops aimed at helping girls overcome the hurdles that prevent them from attending school (i.e. domestic chores, early marriages). In partnership with MOE, IOM continued to distribute age-appropriate, illustrative exercise books depicting counter-trafficking activities to secondary school students throughout the country. MOE and IOM helped to initiate peer group discussions on trafficking among 200 secondary and junior secondary school students in the country. Students received cassette and CD recordings on the ill effects of trafficking, which were also broadcast through school media during recess.

¶E. In 2006, the government showed more effective partnering with IOM, the Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association (EWLA), and the Forum for Street Children in Ethiopia (FSCE). MOLSA works closely with IOM on anti-trafficking activities but partners with very few indigenous NGOs (apart from making some data available to them upon request). By contrast, Ethiopian officials at consulates in Beirut and Dubai have reported that they have developed anti-trafficking professional networks with NGOs and churches in Lebanon. While NGOs in Ethiopia and in Lebanon applaud the cooperative efforts of the consulate staff, all are quick to note that they are overworked and under-funded. As part of its capacity enhancement plans, IOM is developing a database for MOLSA and has coordinated a study tour for government officials. Counselors have started hosting pre-departure orientation sessions in MOLSA to streamline labor migration and enhance its migration management activities. Project Concern International (PCI), with a USD 20,000 grant from Post, played a

central role (along with IOM) in the design and delivery of two regional multi-day workshops delivered in November 2006 and January 2007 to NGO representatives, as well as to regional government and judicial officials.

¶F. The government monitors its borders within the context of its limited capacity. There are large swaths of territory along Ethiopia's borders with Sudan, Kenya and Somalia that are not currently monitored by Ethiopian border officials. The GOE Immigration Authority has set up a number of checkpoints to verify legal entries and exits. Border control points have been set up in Metema, Dewele, Galafi, Dire Dawa (at the center of town), and Moyale. Border guards check whether necessary documents (passports) are in order and that visas are appropriately and legitimately stamped. Border guards also seek to verify that migrant workers have proper employment contracts and have completed MOLSA's parallel authorizing process. Guards are also authorized to prevent unaccompanied minors from crossing borders without a legal adult guardian.

¶G. (See response to 27 B above.)

¶H. MOLSA's annual action plan included a summary of its work plans for the year.

¶7. (U) NOTE: Responses to reftel questions on prosecution of traffickers and on protection of victims are being reported septel.
END NOTE.

WILGUS